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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **DECAL joins Zoo Atlanta for Educator Appreciation Day**

*Educators receive FREE admission and \$2 OFF General Admission for accompanying guests*

**ATLANTA, Ga., (February 10, 2015)** – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning will again partner with Zoo Atlanta as they host Educator Appreciation Day on **Saturday, March 14, 2015**, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Early care and education professionals throughout the state are encouraged to bring their guests to the Zoo for a day of fun-filled activities.

Educators will receive free admission and \$2 off general admission for each of their guests. Please note that educator identification is required. Types of ID include an employee ID with a photo; a pay stub or name badge imprinted with school name or county along with a state-issued photo ID; or a homeschool declaration of intent and a state-issued photo ID. Educators are encouraged to pre-register at [http://www.zooatlanta.org/home/article\\_content/educator\\_appreciation\\_day](http://www.zooatlanta.org/home/article_content/educator_appreciation_day).

“This is a great opportunity for educators all across the state to come and experience Zoo Atlanta, with free admission for them and discounts for their guests,” said DECAL Commissioner Amy M. Jacobs. “In addition to the great zoo experience, educators can visit the Educator Lounge at the Ford Tent for private animal encounters and a chance to talk with the Zoo’s education staff.”

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In addition, guests will receive a coupon for 10 percent off purchases in the gift shop and food outlets (coupon valid on March 14 only). More information on Zoo Atlanta's Educator Appreciation Day is available by calling 404.624.WILD or through e-mail at [education@zooatlanta.org](mailto:education@zooatlanta.org).

### **About Zoo Atlanta**

Founded in 1889 with the purchase of a bankrupt traveling circus, Zoo Atlanta celebrates its 125th anniversary in 2014. Viewed as one of the finest zoological parks in the U.S., the Zoo is a proud accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), with a mission to inspire value and preservation of wildlife through a unique mix of education and outdoor family fun. From well-known native wildlife to critically endangered species on the brink of extinction, the Zoo offers memorable close encounters with more than 1,500 animals from around the world. Highlights include Mei Lun and Mei Huan, the only twin giant pandas in the U.S.; the nation's largest zoological collections of gorillas and orangutans; and a global center of excellence for the care and study of reptiles and amphibians. Up-close-and-personal experiences include giraffe feeding, permitting guests to hand-feed Earth's tallest living land mammals, and behind-the-scenes Wild Encounters with African elephants, giant pandas, lemurs and Aldabra giant tortoises. The Zoo is open daily with the exceptions of Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Keeper talks, interactive wildlife shows, education programs and special events run year-round. For more information, visit [zooatlanta.org](http://zooatlanta.org) or call 404.624.WILD.

Zoo Atlanta's award-winning Zoo Atlanta Education Department dedicates itself to fostering connections between people and wildlife and instilling lifelong habits of stewardship, conservation responsibility and appreciation for the natural world. Zoo education programs offer age-specific learning opportunities for infants to adults of all ages, and all school programs are aligned with Georgia state performance standards. Safari Day Camps, NightCrawler overnights, Toddler Programs, Keeper for a Day and Wild Encounters run year-round. To learn how to get involved, call 404.624.WILD or visit [zooatlanta.org](http://zooatlanta.org).

### **About Bright from the Start**

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages *Quality Rated*, Georgia's community powered child care rating system.

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The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to [www.dec.state.ga.us](http://www.dec.state.ga.us).